retaining surface and an outer press surface extending between the ends of the jaw member,

the jaw members being connected together at their hinge ends, such that the jaw members (i) have a first, self-sustaining open position in which the outer ends are spaced apart to define a receiving space and the inner retaining surfaces are generally not facing one another whereby the one or more items [may] pass into and between the jaw members without requiring external pressure to maintain the jaw members in the open position, (ii) a 1 have a plurality of second, closed positions in which the outer ends are engaged and the inner retaining surfaces are in confronting relationship, and (iii) are self-aligned such that the outer ends automatically engage together upon applying pressure on the outer press surfaces.

3. (Amended) The device of claim 1 wherein one of said a2 jaw members is integrally attached to an item that is handled or stored, the outer press surface of the jaw member that is integrally attached to said item being a surface of said item.

7. (Amended) The device of claim 1 [further comprising] a3 wherein said latch comprises an engaging mechanism at the outer ends of the jaw members.

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11. (Amended) The device of claim 9 wherein the pawl is driven by spring force into its disengaging position, and further a4 comprising a second mechanical latch coupled to the pawl to hold the pawl in its engaged position.

15. (Amended) The device of claim 1 [further a5 comprising] wherein said latch comprises an engaging mechanism at the hinge end of the jaw members.

31. (Amended) The method of claim 23 adapted to handling or storing one or more bags, further comprising passing a6 one of said jaw members through handles for said one or more bags [through the space defined by the outer ends in the open position of the device] and then placing the device into one of the plurality of closed positions.

32. (Amended) The method of claim 23 adapted to handling or storing plantings, further comprising passing said planting through the space defined by the outer ends in the open position of the device, and then placing the device in [its] one of the plurality of closed [position] positions around the planting.

33. (Amended) The method of claim 32 used in mending a break in a planting, comprising passing the planting through the space defined by the outer ends in the open position of the device, and then placing the device in [its] one of the plurality of closed [position] positions around the planting in the area of the break.

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34. (Amended) The method of claim 23 used in training a planting, further comprising passing two parts of said planting through the space defined by the outer ends in the open position of the device, and then placing the device in [its] one of the plurality of closed [position] positions around the two parts of said planting.

35. (Amended) The method of claim 23 used in grafting two plantings, further comprising passing at least one of said plantings through the space defined by the outer ends in the open position of the device, and then placing the device [its] in one of the plurality of closed [position] positions around the plantings in the area of the graft.

38. (Amended) The method of claim 23 adapted to personal adornment, wherein the items are parts of a person's

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